Remigio Silva: "Musica" for the Working People

Over 70 years as a Mexican-American musician

Remigio Silva grew up admiring the music that was becoming popular in the 1940s and 1950s in the San Antonio and South Texas area. He was born in Devine, Texas, 40 miles south of San Antonio. Along with his family, mother Paula Rodrigues Silva, they enjoyed their father, Lucas Silva, strum on the guitar, along with his uncle on the violin, to provide "musica ranchera" for their entertainment.

1961 in Munday, Texas Remigio's brother Ramon plays accordion at home with his father Lucas Silva, "Los Dos Silvas".Remigio Sliva Collection.

Remigio and his six brothers Raul, Ramon, Ramiro, Reymundo, Rosendo, and Rodrigo, all grew up listening to conjunto music. Music made popular by early recording artist such as Narciso Martinez, Tony DeLaRosa, Agapito Zuniga, Ozcar Hernandez, El Conjunto Bernal and many other groups that made conjunto music the favorites of working "mexicanos".

In the 1950s, the family migrated to the agriculture fields of West Texas. Working briefly in the Winters, Texas area, they continued to pursue the cotton fields, finally settling in Munday, Texas. While living in Munday, twin sisters, Rosalinda and Rosa Anna, were born at a nearby hospital.

In 1954 Remigio and his friend Chuy Mesa traveled from Munday to Abilene, Texas to record two songs at an impoverished recording studio in south Abilene. Remigio played the guitar, while Chuy was on the accordion. No records exist of the recording session; it would be several more years before Remigio would join a group to record his first 45rpm record.

1960s Los Vavegantes de Monterrey.in Chicago, Illinois. Remigio Silva Collection

In 1959 he married his wife, Gladys, in Benjamin, Texas. By 1960 they packed their belongings in a suitcase, and set out to Chicago, Illinois, to stay with her tio and tia, and start a new life. Remigio found a job as a auto mechanic and eventually a musical group to share his talents. The first group that he joined were Los Navegantes de Monterrey, that played Norteno music. Eventually his parents and brothers followed them to Chicago, where the jobs were more lucrative.

In the thirteen years that Remigio lived in Chicago, he played music with approximately seven

groups. In 1962, his first professional recordings, on a single 45 vinyl, was with Chavelo Cavazos y su Conjunto. The group Nat Ponce y Los Chubi Dubis, would be the last band he played for, in Chicago. (See complete list in Musical History below.)

In 1973 Remigio and his family returned to Abilene to work with his brother Reymundo (Rey) at the Payless Body Shop. Auto body work was not a job that he was familiar with, but Rey was there to get him started. He eventually opened his own body shop next door, Silva's Body Shop.

In Abilene, along with his son Remigio Silva, Jr., they together formed their own band, Los Vijilantes de Remigio Silva. He played music, over the years, with Los Nuevos de Jose Chavaria, Los Fantasticos de Carlos Fernandez, Los Preferidos de Abilene, Los Trunifos de los Hermanos Landeros, La Amistad de Abilene and Sunny Castillo y Los Midnights.

Remigio enjoyed playing the music that he grew up with, using his musical talents, and being a part of the Abilene entertainment scene. His versatility on the various musical instruments, which included the accordion, guitar, bajo sexto, and the base, made him a fit to any band.

From the 1995 to 2004 he opened and operated the Fiesta Ballroom. He promoted all genres of Hispanic music.

Now retired, he retreats to his backyard shop, working on his cars and recreating that old music from vinyl records to CDs. He also repairs accordions, such as dry them up, tune ups or replacing broken reeds. He also plays in his parish Spanish choir for Sunday Mass services.

In 2020 he finally parted from his accordion, but not before he posed for one last photograph.

By Mike P. Hernandez
Arroyo Catclaw Digital
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<u>Remigio Silva played with these groups.</u>

In Chicago Illinois:
Los Navegantes de Monterrey, Bajo Sexto
Jessie Garcia y Los Falcones, Bajo Sexto

2020 Remigio Silva, one last farewell to his a
Silva Collection

Juan Martinez y Los Dragones de Texas, Bajo Sexto
Pepe Aldape y Los Comodines, Bajo Sexto
Max Perez y Los Shegies, Bajo Sexto
Manuel Alisondo y Los Mexicanos, Bajo Serxto
Nat Ponce y Los Chubi Dubis, Bajo Sexto
Chavelo Cavazos y su Conjunto, Bajo Sexto

In Abilene, Texas:
Los Vijilantes de Remigio Silva, Sr., Accordion
Los Nuevos de Jose Chavaria, Accordion
Los Fantasticos de Carlos Fernandez, Bajo Sexto
Lo Preferidos de Abilene, Accordion and Base Guitar

Los Trumfos de Los Hermanos Landeros, Bajo Sexto and Bas
La Amistad de Abilene, Base
Sunny Castillo y Los Midnights, Accordion and Base

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Remigio Silva with Paulino Bernal, Conjunto Bernal, in Chicago, Illinos. Remigio Silva Collection

1967 Los Chubi Dubias, Chicago, Illinois. Remigio Silva Collection

1969 Manuel Elsondo y su Mexicanos, Chicago, Illinois. Remigio Silva Collection

Carlos Fernandez y los Fantasticos, Chicago, Illinois. Remigio Silva Collection

Rey Silva, accordion, 1961, Munday, Texas. Remigio Silva Collection

Grupo La Amistad, Abilene, Texas. Remigio Silva Collection

First profession recordings on AJUA label in Chicago Illinois. Remigio Silva Collection